

VZCZCXR07763

PP RUEHDU RUEHJO RUEHMR

DE RUEHSA #0080 0141029

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 141029Z JAN 10

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0880

INFO RUEHOR/AMEMBASSY GABORONE 5577

RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE 3943

RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 6197

RUEHMR/AMEMBASSY MASERU 2951

RUEHMB/AMEMBASSY MBABANE 4610

RUEHWD/AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK 0007

RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 7501

RUEHDU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 1567

RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 9857

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 000080

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

CORRECTED COPY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2020

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM PREF CVIS SF

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA FIGHTS RAMPANT PASSPORT FRAUD

REF: A. 09 PRETORIA 2589

¶B. 09 PRETORIA 2622

Classified By: DCM Helen LaLime for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (SBU) As noted in post's 2009 Terrorism Report (ref A), South Africa has a poor record of document security with respect to passports issued by its Department of Home Affairs (DHA). The high incidence of genuine documents fraudulently issued to non-nationals prompted the U.K. to impose a visa regime on South Africa last year. Home Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma aims to confront the problem, however.

Since shortly after her appointment in May 2009, she has candidly acknowledged corruption and other dysfunction within DHA, and she has energetically continued her predecessor's "Turnaround" project to improve process and systems controls and eliminate fraud (ref B).

¶12. (SBU) Stepping up this campaign, DHA launched a post-Christmas blitz to collect fraudulent passports. Newspapers reported that as many as 80 passports a day suspected of being fraudulent were confiscated from travelers entering the single port of entry at Beitbridge, Zimbabwe. The other border post of focus was Lebombo, Mozambique. (Zimbabwe and Mozambique are by far the greatest sources of migrant workers to South Africa.) Persons whose passports were seized were questioned by border officers. According to DHA Deputy Director General Jackie MacKay, "most" such individuals intercepted by Home Affairs did admit their passports were fraudulent. Others were issued with summonses to appear for interviews at DHA centers, as an opportunity to prove their citizenship.

¶13. (C) Comment: one press article refers to "dodgy" passports. Post conoffs believe this description is misleading, since in their experience the problem is rather one of genuine passports obtained on the basis of fraudulent supporting documents and/or irregular issuance practices by DHA officials. Conoffs reason that if the documents confiscated at Beitbridge were patently fake, the bearers would be denied entry; whereas in these cases bearers who continued to assert citizenship under questioning were admitted and given tickets to appear later to prove their claims. End comment.

GIPS